Eddy Correlation Flux Measurement System-Handbook



November 2005



Work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science, Office of Biological and Environmental Research

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1. General Overview

The eddy correlation (ECOR) flux measurement system provides in situ, half-hour measurements of the surface turbulent fluxes of momentum, sensible heat, latent heat, and carbon dioxide. The fluxes are obtained with the eddy covariance technique, which involves correlation of the vertical wind component with the horizontal wind component, the air temperature, the water vapor density, and the CO₂ concentration. The instruments used are

- a fast-response, three-dimensional (3D) wind sensor (sonic anemometer) to obtain the
 orthogonal wind components and the speed of sound (SOS) (used to derive the air
 temperature) and
- an open-path infrared gas analyzer (IRGA) to obtain the water vapor density and the CO₂ concentration.

The ECOR systems are deployed at the locations where other methods for surface flux measurements (e.g., energy balance Bowen ratio systems) are difficult to employ, primarily at the north edge of a field of crops.

2. Contacts

2.1 Mentor

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2.2 Instrument Developer

Sensor Vendors

3D sonic anemometer, model WindMaster Pro: Gill Instruments, Limited, http://www.gill.co.uk (U.S. distributor: PP Systems, 978.834.0505, support@ppsystems.com)

Infrared gas analyzer, model LI-7500: LI-COR, Inc., http://www.licor.com/env (LI-COR Environmental, 402.467.3576, 800.447.3576)

3. Deployment Locations and History

Table 1 shows the SGP site locations of the ECOR flux measurement system.

Table 1. Deployment Information of the ECOR Flux Measurement System.						
Facility	Location	Date installed	Status			
SGP/EF1	Larned, KS	March 9, 2004	Operational			
SGP/EF3	LeRoy, KS	March 7, 2004	Operational			
SGP/EF5	Halstead, KS	Sept. 9, 2003	Operational			
SGP/EF6	Towanda, KS	Sept. 15, 2003	Operational			
SGP/EF10	Tyro, KS	Oct. 3, 2003	Operational			
SGP/EF14	Lamont, OK	June 3, 2003	Operational			
SGP/EF16	Vici, OK	Sept. 25, 2003	Operational			
SGP/EF21	Okmulgee, OK	Feb. 11, 2004	Operational			
SGP/EF24	Cyril, OK	March 18, 2004	Operational			

4. Near-Real-Time Data Plots

Near-real-time data plots can be accessed via the Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Program Data Quality Health and Status (DQ HandS) Plot Browser (http://dq.arm.gov/plotbrowser/); choose Southern Great Plains ("SGP") as "Search Site" and "sgp30ecor" as "Datastream" in the corresponding scroll boxes.

5. Data Description and Examples

5.1 Data File Contents

Currently, the ECOR systems produce 00- and b1-level data files. Initial processing takes place on the ECOR computer at the end of each half-hour measuring period. The data ingest process adds quality control (QC) flags and generates daily b1-level netCDF files, in keeping with ARM policy. See a complete ECOR netCDF file header description (http://science.arm.gov/tool/dod/showdod.php?Inst=ecor).

Both raw data (00 level) and b1 datastreams are routinely shipped to the ARM Archive. Although b1 data are available though the standard Archive interface, the raw data (00 level) are available only by request to the Archive (armarchive@ornl.gov). A detailed description of the raw data files (00 level) is available from the instrument mentor upon request (mspekour@anl.gov).

5.1.1 Primary Variables and Expected Uncertainty

The ECOR system makes direct measurements at a rate of 10 Hz of the following parameters:

- Three wind components: u, v, and w [m s⁻¹]
- SOS, s [m s⁻¹], which is used to derive atmospheric temperature, t_a [°K]
- Water vapor density, q [mmol m⁻³]

- CO₂ concentration, c [mmol m⁻³]
- Atmospheric pressure, p_a [kPa]

Variable	Name in netCDF file	Unit
Sensible heat flux, <i>H</i>	Н	Wm ⁻²
Latent heat flux, $L_{\nu}E$	lv_e	Wm ⁻²
Momentum flux (dynamic), M	K	kg m ⁻¹ s ⁻²
Friction velocity, u_*	Ustar	m s ⁻¹
CO_2 flux, F_{CO2}	Fc	μmol m ⁻² s ⁻¹
Mean wind speed (vector averaged), V	wind_spd	m s ⁻¹
Mean wind direction, D	wind_dir	deg
Mean atmospheric temperature, T_a	mean_t	°K
Mean water vapor density, Q	mean_q	mmol m ⁻³
Mean CO ₂ concentration, C	mean_c	mmol m ⁻³
Mean atmospheric pressure, P_a	atm_pres	kPa

Expected uncertainties of the fluxes, due to measurement accuracies of primary variables, are within the following limits: $\delta H = 6\%$, $\delta L_{\nu}E = 5\%$, $\delta M = 5\%$, $\delta F_{CO2} = 4\%$.

5.1.1.1 Definition of Uncertainty

This section is not applicable to this instrument.

5.1.2 Secondary/Underlying Variables

The b1-level data file contains all statistics that were used for estimating fluxes and a number of additional variables to support a variety of advanced QC procedures.

Calculated statistics include mean, variance, covariance, skewness, and kurtosis of each of the primary measured values: u, v, w, Ta, q, and C. A two-axis coordinates rotation procedure is applied to find vertical turbulent fluxes; all relevant rotated statistics (rotation angles, means, variances, and covariances) are included in the data file. The file also contains standard deviations of wind direction and wind elevation angle. Several air parameters needed to obtain fluxes in conventional "density"-based units (moist air density, specific heat capacity, etc.) are also in the data file.

5.1.3 Diagnostic Variables

Several types of diagnostics variables are kept in the b1 file:

1. **Data processing:** Number of valid samples for each primary variable, number and means of detected and removed outliers, number of invalid or out-of-range samples.

- 2. **Sensor status:** Serial number of the sensor, number of samples with invalid sonic status flag, number of samples with invalid IRGA status flag ("hardware problem" and "blocked optical path" given separately), IRGA calibration factors used to convert voltages into physical units, and the time lag value used to synchronize sonic and IRGA datastreams.
- 3. **Environmental:** Average voltage of IRGA cooler, average temperature inside the IRGA electronics enclosure.

5.1.4 Data Quality Flags

The b1 data file contains basic data-quality flags for most important variables; the flags indicate the variable status (bit values), as follows:

- 0x0 = value is within the specified range.
- 0x1 = value is equal to "missing_value."
- 0x2 = value is less than "valid min."
- 0x4 = value is greater than "valid_max."
- 0x8 = value failed the "valid_delta" check.

5.1.5 Dimension Variables

The global attributes section of the netCDF data file contains geographic coordinates (location) of the ECOR system and the altitude of the ground where the instrument is deployed; the "sensor location" parameter refers to the height of the instrument above the ground. The time variables denote the beginning of the 30-minute measuring period.

The sign convention for primary (measured) variables and estimated quantities is positive for upward vertical wind component and upward atmospheric flux.

The standard ARM site arrangement has the sonic sensor "North" mark pointing along the boom to the tower; the boom is usually pointing due south; the u wind component is north-south with positive toward the north; the v wind component is east-west with positive toward the west. NOTE: No correction is made to convert the u or v component into the meteorological "north" or "east" wind component when the tower boom is not aligned to the south; the u wind component is "along boom," the v wind component is "cross boom."

5.2 Annotated Examples

Not available at this time.

5.3 User Notes and Known Problems

Currently, we are aware of one problem that affects ECOR performance. Real temperature values derived from SOS measurements of the WindMaster Pro are significantly overestimated at low temperatures and underestimated at high temperatures. Calibration of nine sonic anemometers in a temperature- and humidity-controlled environment showed that each sensor temperature response was biased and had a "slope" that differed significantly from 1:1, ranging from 0.71 to 0.87. Bias has no influence on sensible

heat flux estimates, but these "slopes" translate directly into a significant heat flux underestimation. That problem became apparent during final tryouts of the system, when it was too late to change to another sonic model or vendor. A linear correction procedure was implemented to account for the identified sensor deficiency; a more detailed discussion is in Pekour (2004).

5.4 Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I get more information about SGP ECOR systems?

Contact the instrument mentor at mspekour@anl.gov

6. Data Quality

6.1 Data Quality Health and Status

The following links go to current data quality health and status results.

- DQ HandS (http://dq.arm.gov)
- NCVweb for interactive data plotting (http://dq.arm.gov/ncvweb/ncvweb.cgi)

The tables and graphs shown contain the techniques used by ARM's data quality analysts, instrument mentors, and site scientists to monitor and diagnose data quality.

6.2 Data Reviews by Instrument Mentor

- Visual QC frequency: Daily to weekly
- QC delay: Typically 1-3 days
- QC type: Instrument mentor routinely views graphic displays that include plots (day courses) of all calculated quantities and comparison plots (time series or scatter plots) of relevant parameters with data from the nearby Surface Meteorological Observing Station.

Monthly reviews of the ECOR data are prepared by the mentor and submitted to the Instrument Mentor Monthly Summary (IMMS) report database; these reports are available at "Related Documents" on the ECOR web page.

6.3 Data Assessments by Site Scientist/Data Quality Office

The following guidance has been provided by the ECOR mentor for use by the Data Quality Office in preparing their weekly assessment report for the ECOR systems.

ECOR Data Quality Guidance David R. Cook 2 November 2005

Introduction: The best way to tell someone what to look for in assessing the ECOR data is to describe conditions that reflect correct and incorrect data. For the most part, the qc checks provide adequate guidance. However, there are conditions for which the QC flags do not provide the needed guidance to be able to interpret the correctness of the data. Therefore, please use the information below as further guidance.

The fc and rho limits were changed in the ingest in late October 2005; therefore, fewer red QC flags should appear for those now.

Primary Measurements: fc (CO₂ flux), lv_e (latent heat flux), h (sensible heat flux), k (momentum flux), ustar (friction velocity); all of these are calculated quantities. The QC limits set in the ingest are appropriate for the measurements (primary and otherwise), although there are times when legitimate values fall outside the QC limits.

Nuisance QC Flags: the k and ustar flags are frequently tripped, especially at the E21 Okmulgee forested site. However, it is normally only when the minimum flag is tripped that there is a concern about data quality; values below the minimum usually indicate low wind speed conditions (< 1 m/s) that do not produce accurate flux (fc, lv_e, h, k) measurements.

Comparison of Data at Different ECOR Sites: The measurements can generally be favorably compared with those at adjacent sites, keeping in mind that climate conditions from one side of the SGP site to another can differ sharply. However, comparisons cannot be made between the E14 (wheat, corn, stubble, bare soil) or E21 (forest) and the other seven ECORs, which make measurements over grass, since the surface vegetation types are different; such comparisons are likely to show significant differences.

Comparison of Data with the EBBR: The only collocated ECOR and EBBR are at E13/E14 (SGP Central Facility). Caution must be used in the comparison of the two systems because they usually see different vegetation surfaces. The best comparison can be made for straight north or northwest wind directions, when both systems view the same grass surface. For other directions, the two systems are viewing different vegetation surfaces and the fluxes from the two will probably not be similar, unless perhaps, the ground is snow covered. Except for the E14 and E21 sites, sensible and latent heat flux, and wind speed and direction measurements can be compared for adjacent ECOR and EBBR systems (which all view grassland), again remembering that there are likely to be climatologically driven differences. No other measurements can be reliably compared, mostly because the ECOR LI-7500 and sonic anemometer are not meant to produce accurate measurements of anything else that both systems measure.

Comparison of Data with the SMOS: SMOS systems are collocated with ECOR systems at seven of the nine ECOR sites (exceptions are E10 and E16). There are no measurements of the two systems that can be directly compared. Wind speed and direction for the two systems are at different heights (SMOS 10 m, ECOR 3 m), so it is expected that the SMOS wind speed will be greater than the ECOR wind speed. Wind direction may be similar but somewhat different if a frontal passage or strong advection is

taking place. The ECOR temperatures (sonic and IRGA) and pressure (IRGA) are only approximate and are not meant to provide the same accuracy as the SMOS absolute measurements; therefore, they can be expected to be considerably different under warm weather conditions, especially.

Common Conditions Reflecting Correct or Incorrect Data:

a) Periods of precipitation, fog, and dew (frost) often cause incorrect water vapor and carbon dioxide measurements. This is caused by water lying on the lower window of the LI-7500 sensor, thereby obstructing the passage of the sensing IR radiation (very light precipitation may have little or no effect). The CO₂ portion of the instrument is more sensitive to this condition, so it is not unusual for latent heat flux to be good, even though the CO₂ flux is not. I have written an ECR to add a wetness sensor to the ECOR system that will (in the future) provide a much better indication of wetness than the SMOS does.

Note: When reporting a range of times to show as incorrect for wetting conditions, it is better to report a continuous range (such as E16 08/15 0000-1300 GMT or E21 08/22 1100-1530 GMT) instead of a few separated ranges with apparently correct data in between. Rarely is the data in between the "incorrect" periods actually good data; it is usually off somewhat from the presence of small amounts of wetting.

- b) The CO₂ mean sometimes flattens out during the daytime (see E24, 08/01/05 and 08/31/05). Although this may appear to be an indication of incorrect data, there are some vegetated surfaces and atmospheric conditions for which this happen naturally. It is best to not report these times as incorrect.
- c) Large spikes (positive and negative) in CO₂ flux can occur when the flux is essentially zero (see E16, 08/16/05, 0800-0930 GMT). This is also a condition that should not be reported as incorrect. I will look at the data closely and report in my ECOR IMMS monthly report if I think that the data is incorrect.
- d) ECOR time stamps are for the beginning of the half hour, whereas those for the SMOS and EBBR are for the end of the half hour. Therefore, when comparing data for these systems (such as on HandS plots), the values for the ECOR show a half hour earlier than the commensurate values for the SMOS and EBBR.
 - Friction velocity (ustar) and momentum flux (k) are often flagged during light wind conditions. This is normal, as these measurements, as well as the fluxes of sensible heat flux (h), latent heat flux (lv_e), and CO_2 flux (fc) are not expected to be accurate under those conditions. Therefore, these conditions also do not need to be reported in the weekly assessment report.
- e) Momentum flux and friction velocity have opposite signs and usually mirror each other, since friction velocity is computed from momentum flux; in the HandS plots they are plotted to scales with opposite sign orientations, so they trend together. If they do not trend together, that should be reported.
- f) Plots of water vapor flux (lv_e) and CO₂ flux (fc) normally mirror each other: in the HandS plots they are plotted to scales with opposite sign orientations, so they tend to trend together. If they do not trend together, that should be reported.

- g) In rare occasions, the flag for elev (angle of attack of the wind) is exceeded, normally on the positive side. The flag limits for elev are quite generous; this is intentional to try to accommodate the large angles that can occur at the forested Okmulgee site E21. However, the angles at the Okmulgee site can often be much larger than the QC limits because of the very uneven height of trees in the mixed deciduous forest at Okmulgee. Large elev angles should not be reported at E21 unless they exceed 10 degrees.
- h) Fluxes of CO₂, sensible heat, and latent heat at E21 Okmulgee forest are often larger than at other sites, particularly the fluxes of water vapor and CO₂; the latter often will be twice what it is at the other ECOR sites. Large fluxes should not be reported as incorrect for E21.
- i) The plots of data from the forest site at E21 Okmulgee show more "jumping around" of the data than is seen at the other ECOR sites; this is expected and normal since the scale of eddies that carry the flux information over the tree structure is much larger than over grassland or crops.

6.4 Value-Added Procedures and Quality Measurement Experiments

None available at present; density effects correction (so-called Wave Propagation Laboratory [WPL] correction) to fluxes and advanced QC procedures are being developed.

7. Instrument Details

7.1 Detailed Description

7.1.1 List of Components

Ultrasonic anemometer: WindMaster Pro by Gill Instruments, Ltd. (http://www.gill.co.uk):

- Full wind vector in the form of orthogonal wind components u, v, and w Accuracy:
 - For u and v = 1.5% root mean square (RMS) error for winds below 20 ms⁻¹, 3% otherwise
 - For w = 3% of magnitude
- SOS

Range: 307 to 367 ms⁻¹ **Resolution:** 0.01 ms⁻¹

Accuracy: 3% RMS error for winds <20 ms⁻¹, 6% RMS error for winds 20 to 60 ms⁻¹

Analog inputs

Type: eight single-ended or four differential (software selectable)

Range: -5 to +5 VDC **Resolution:** 14 bit

Accuracy: 0.05% of full scale (for temperature from +5 to +35°C) 0.1% of full scale (for -40 to +5°C, +35 to +60°C)

Open-path CO₂/H₂O IRGA: LI-7500 by LI-COR, Inc. (http://www.licor.com/env):

water vapor density

Range: 0 to 2000 mmol m⁻³ (software selectable) **Accuracy:** About 1% (limited by calibration)

Precision: About 0.14 mmol m⁻³ (typical RMS noise).

• CO₂ concentration

Range: 8 to 32 mmol m⁻³ (software selectable) **Accuracy:** About 1% (limited by calibration) **Precision:** About 4 μmol m⁻³ (typical RMS noise).

Analog outputs

Type: Two-user selectable

Range: 0 to 5 V DC Resolution: 16 bit Update rate: 300 Hz

Data acquisition computer

- Personal computer clone computer under Linux operating system; currently 266-MHz environmentally hardened laptop
- Data collection and initial processing performed with ECOR software (written in C by M. Pekour at Argonne National Laboratory).

7.1.2 System Configuration and Measurement Methods

In a typical arrangement, the ECOR system is placed on the north side of a wheat field; sonic and IRGA sensor heads are mounted on a small tower at 3 m above ground level, at the end of a horizontal boom pointing south. The computer and communication devices are installed in an enclosure with basic temperature control (ventilation or heating). One exception to the usual arrangement is the Okmulgee site (EF21), where the ECOR system is installed on a tall tower (15 m above ground, about 3 m above the canopy) in a hardwood forest.

The IRGA provides fast-response measurements of water vapor density and CO₂ concentration in digital and analog form; the sonic anemometer provides three wind components and the SOS data in digital form (retrieved via serial link) at a rate of 10 Hz and performs synchronous digitization of the IRGA analog outputs. The digital datastream from the IRGA is also recorded by the data acquisition computer; it is used to extract IRGA diagnostics values and as a second copy of the water vapor density and CO₂ concentration data.

The raw datastream is recorded into raw data files by 30-min portions and is processed every half hour by the ECOR computer. The raw and processed data files are transferred to the Central Facility for ingest (conversion into the netCDF format and incorporation of QC flags) and shipment to the ARM Archive.

7.1.3 Specifications

This section is not applicable to this instrument.

7.2 Theory of Operation

The WindMaster Pro sonic anemometer uses three pairs of orthogonally oriented, ultrasonic transmitter/receiver transducers to measure the transit time of sound signals traveling between the transducer pairs in both directions. Pairs of measurements made along each axis, 30 times per second, are averaged appropriately to provide a 10-Hz datastream. The wind speed along each axis is determined from the difference in transit times. The SOS is determined from the average transit time along all three axes. The air temperature can be derived from the SOS with a well-known correction for the humidity effects.

The IRGA measures water vapor density and CO₂ density by detecting the absorption of infrared radiation by water vapor or CO₂ in the light path. Two infrared wavelength bands are used, centered on strong water vapor or CO₂ absorption lines. The sensor provides digital (serial RS232) and analog (two 16-bit DAC) outputs. Details of the IRGA principles, design, and performance can be obtained from LI-COR Environmental (http://env.licor.com/PDF_Files/LI7500.pdf).

The sonic anemometer samples the gas analyzer analog outputs ten times per second, synchronously with wind measurements, and combines all the data into a single serial datastream.

The data acquisition computer continuously records serial datastreams from both sensors and stores them into 30-minute files. Half-hourly flux data processing is accomplished on the same computer, independently of the data acquisition process. Half-hour-averaged ambient air temperature, water vapor pressure, and barometric pressure derived from the sonic anemometer and the IRGA raw data are used in the calculations of moist air density, specific heat of dry and moist air at constant pressure, and heat of vaporization of water necessary for presentation of the fluxes in "density-based" units.

Data analysis includes a de-spiking procedure, basic QC of every data point (sensor status, minimum/maximum check), time delay for the sonic data to account for the internal delay in the IRGA, conversion of the SOS into air temperature, and computation of statistics (mean, variance, covariance, skewness, kurtosis, etc.). Two-dimensional (2D) coordinate rotations are applied to the variances and covariances to achieve zero mean vertical and transverse wind speeds.

Momentum flux is determined from the correlation between horizontal and vertical wind components in "rotated" coordinates. Similarly, the vertical fluxes of sensible heat, latent heat, and CO_2 are determined directly from the correlation between the "rotated" vertical velocity and temperature, water vapor density, and CO_2 concentration, respectively.

In general, the fluxes calculated as described represent vertical fluxes from a variable area (a footprint) of the surface upwind of the instrument. The size of this area usually varies from 10 to 100 times the height of the sensors above the surface. The footprint depends on surface properties (roughness, displacement height, etc), atmospheric state and stability, and turbulent intensity within the atmospheric surface layer.

The surface conditions (crop height, density, and state) can be found in the ECOR section of Extended Facility Surface Conditions Observations weekly reports (http://198.124.96.210:591/sfc_cond1/default.htm).

See Citable References for further discussions.

7.3 Calibration

7.3.1 Theory

Ideally, the sonic anemometer does not require calibration for either wind or temperature measurements, although the WindMaster Pro SOS channel needs to be calibrated to achieve accurate sensible heat measurement (see Pekour, 2004, for more detailed discussion). The IRGA sensors need to be calibrated periodically. The IRGA is calibrated by passing gas of known concentration through a calibration tube installed in the sensor head, so that the tube surrounds the light path over which infrared absorption is measured. The zero (offset) is typically calibrated by using "zero" gas or dry nitrogen from a gas cylinder. The gains of the CO₂ and H₂O channels are calibrated by using a cylinder with a known concentration of CO₂ and flow from a water vapor generator (e.g., Licor Inc. LI-610 Dew Point Generator).

7.3.2 Procedures

No detailed description of calibration procedures is available yet. The calibration procedure for the IRGA basically follows the manufacturer's recommendations (LI-7500 User Manual, Section 4).

7.3.3 History

The Calibration Test Reports can be accessed here (http://198.124.96.210/menus/caltopmenu.html).

7.4 Operation and Maintenance

7.4.1 User Manual

No single comprehensive user manual for the ECOR system is available for general use; rather, vendorsupplied documentation on sensors and a collection of procedures prepared by mentors are provided for internal use by Site Operations.

7.4.2 Routine and Corrective Maintenance Documentation

The ECOR Preventive Maintenance procedures and reports are online (http://198.124.96.210:591/ef_pm1/default_1.htm), as is a database of Corrective Maintenance reports (http://198.124.96.210/menus/cmreports.html).

7.4.3 Software Documentation

Contact the instrument mentor (mspekour@anl.gov) for software documentation.

7.4.4 Additional Documentation

This section is not applicable to this instrument.

7.5 Glossary

Also see the ARM Glossary.

7.6 Acronyms

2D two-dimensional3D three-dimensional

ARM Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (Program)

DQ Data Quality

ECOR eddy correlation (flux measurement)

IRGA infrared gas analyzer RMS root mean square SGP Southern Great Plains

SOS speed of sound QC quality control

WPL Wave Propagation Laboratory

Also see the ARM Acronyms and Abbreviations.

7.7 Citable References

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